

BALLOON LIFTS

Balloon Lifts are a progression of The Up and Up. In this activity, both arms press a balloon upward.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Enhances torso and shoulder function, strength, and flexibility.
- ⦿ Strengthens especially the back extensors and abdominal wall.
- ⦿ Mimics everyday lifting and reaching skills.
- ⦿ Facilitates the concept of length with strength.

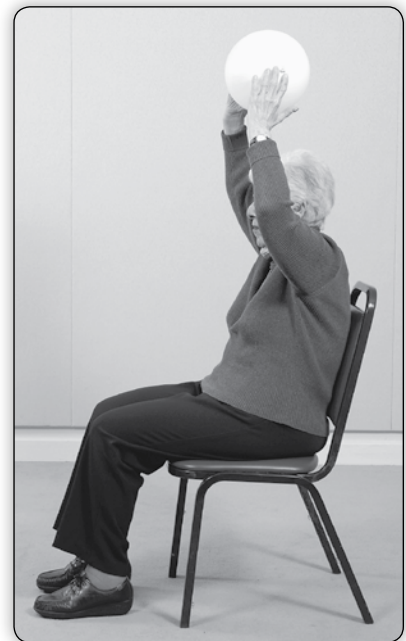
Set It Up »

Each participant will need a balloon, plus have a few extra on hand. Some variations use light-weight balls or hand weights.

How to Do It »

The Start

- ⦿ Participants sit comfortably with their back away from the chair, if possible. Hips can touch the chair, but the back should not. Abdominals are braced, shoulder blades back and down, chin level, and head retracted.
- ⦿ They hold the balloon in both hands, close to the body at waist level.
- ⦿ Inhale to prepare.



The Moves

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Exhale, keep the balloon close to the body, and use both hands to push the balloon as far up and overhead as is comfortable. Allow the ribs to lift a little, too.
- ⦿ Can you push a little higher? (Allow participants to make that adjustment.)
- ⦿ Can you sit a little taller? (Allow participants to make that adjustment.)
- ⦿ Inhale and pull a little taller.
- ⦿ Exhale and lower the balloon to the starting position.
- ⦿ Repeat the lifts 4 times and progress to doing 12 times, as tolerated.

Take It Further »

- ⦿ Use a lightweight ball (such as a soccer ball) instead of the balloon.
- ⦿ Hold a single, 1- or 2-pound (.5- or 1-kilogram) weight with both hands instead of the balloon.

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Sit closer to the edge of the chair.
- ⦿ Sit on the edge of the chair with offset or tandem feet.
- ⦿ Instead of pushing the balloon straight up, push it right and then left.

Keep It Safe »

Ideally, participants will keep balloons in line and above their shoulders as they lift and draw in their abdominal wall with each lift of the balloon. Many of your participants have bent-over backs. Keeping their abdominals in while reaching up will help support their back while they lift. Pushing balloons to right and left may not be appropriate for some individuals with osteoporosis. Nothing should hurt.

Live It »

Lifting both arms together with good back support is truly uplifting!